

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8514

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 4339

EXDIS

FOR ARA - LUERS AND SHLAUDEMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR VE

SUBJ: FURTHER CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: CARACAS 4320

1. FOREIGN MINISTER CALLED ME LAST NIGHT TO SAY THAT HE HAD JUST TALKED TO THE SECRETARY ON THE TELEPHONE. HE HAD BEEN VERY HAPPY TO RECEIVE THE CALL, HE SAID, AND HAD INFORMED THE SECRETARY THAT HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING HIM IN WASHINGTON. HE ASKED ME TO REITERATE THE ABOVE TO THE SECRETARY, SINCE HE WAS NOT SURE THAT WITH HIS LIMITED ENGLISH HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO CONVEY HIS SATISFACTION WITH THE SECRETARY'S GESTURE. IT WAS CLEAR THAT A RESPONSIVE CORD HAD BEEN STRUCK.

2. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ADDED THAT HE HAD CONVEYED TO THE SECRETARY SOME OF THE SAME POINTS THAT WERE TRANSMITTED IN REFTEL AND THAT SPECIFICALLY HE HAD EXPLAINED THE PRESS MISREPRESENTATIONS OF WHAT HE HAD SAID WITH REGARD TO THE OAS SANCTIONS VOTING RULES.

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT WHILE THEY WERE NOT PLANNING TO PUBLISH THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER (STATE 093044) HE WAS STRUCK BY THE PHRASE "I LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOUR FOREIGN MINISTER, RAMON ESCOVAR SALOM, DURING THE
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES,

NEXT MONTH." AND WAS WONDERING IF THIS MEANT THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD RECEIVE HIM IN WASHINGTON. IF THIS WERE THE CASE, HE WISHED TO RELEASE THE NEWS IMMEDIATELY. I SAID THAT THE PHRASE WAS SUFFICIENTLY IMPRECISE SO THAT IT MIGHT REFER TO THE PRESIDENT'S PRESENCE AT SOME SOCIAL OR OFFICIAL EVENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE OASGA AND THOUGHT IT PREFERABLE FOR ME TO CHECK BEFORE HE ANNOUNCED ANYTHING. THE FOREIGN MINISTER AGREED.

4. COMMENT: I RECOMMEND THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE PRESIDENT'S RECEIVING FOREIGN MINISTER ESCOBAR SALOM. IN FACT, WHILE PERHAPS IT IS NOT MY PLACE TO SUGGEST IT, THIS CONCEPT SHOULD BE APPLIED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE THREE COUNTRIES WHERE THE SECRETARY'S VISIT WAS POSTPONED. IN MY VIEW THIS WOULD CONVERT ANY MERE DAMAGE LIMITING ACTIVITY INTO A POSITIVE RESPONSE THAT WILL DO MORE THAN ANY WORDS COULD POSSIBLY ACCOMPLISH TO DEMONSTRATE THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH WE VIEW OUR RELATIONS WITH THE HEMISPHERE. IT WOULD BE THE TYPE OF GESTURE THAT LATINS WOULD UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE.

5. IT IS APPARENT THAT ESCOBAR SALOM'S SWEETNESS AND LIGHT APPROACH IS PARTLY TACTICAL AND DESIGNED TO INSURE THAT HE HAS THE BEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT VENEZUELA'S STORY IN THE U.S. (SEE REFTTEL) AND TO SHINE BACK HOME. I AM CONVINCED, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS ALSO ANXIOUS TO IMPROVE U.S./VENEZUELAN RELATIONS. THE POINT IS THAT BY HELPING HIM WE ARE PRESENTED WITH AN UNEQUALLED OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE OUR OWN CASE TO THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT.
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